

Agenda Item	3.
Report No	SCC/17/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Sutherland County Committee

Date: 22 November 2021

Report Title: Review of Speed Limit Review Bonar Bridge to Ardgay

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report details outcome of a further review of the assessment of the request to reduce the speed limit between Bonar Bridge and Ardgay to 30mph along the length of the route.
- 1.2 The original report was in response to the communities of Bonar Bridge and Ardgay requesting that the speed limit between the villages be reduced from the current national speed limit to 30mph. The original report outlined the assessment of the speed limit on this route and provided recommendations based on current guidance and best practice.
- 1.3 Should Members agree to the recommendations to promote a Traffic Regulation Order, then this will follow, and any representations made will be brought back to a future committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. Agree to the promotion of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in respect of a reduction in the 60mph speed limit to 30mph by extending the Bonar Bridge 30mph speed limit by 270m or thereby generally westwards towards Ardgay.
 - ii. Agree that the TRO will also include the remainder of the national speed between Bonar Bridge and Ardgay is to be reduced to 50mph.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – The funding of the promotion of the order and the subsequent installation of a new speed limit will be funded from the Sutherland Area Road Revenue Budget.

- 3.2 **Legal** - Speed limits require to be supported by a Road Traffic Regulation Order, which is a statutory process – any representations made in respect of the TRO will be brought back for consideration by committee.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** – Lower vehicle speeds aim to reduce the risks for vulnerable road users.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – Reduced vehicle speeds have the aim of increasing active travel choices and thus potentially reducing the number of vehicles, and as a result emissions, on the roads.
- 3.5 **Risk** – Speed limit reductions should be designed to be self-enforcing as a result monitoring will be required after installation to ensure compliance, and remedial measures may prove necessary.
- 3.6 **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic Implications.

4. Background

- 4.1 Sutherland County Committee agreed on 16 August 2021 to defer approving the recommendations in report SCC/14/21 for further review and legal advice in relation to the introduction of a 30mph along the entire length of the road and on the basis a report be brought back to committee in November 2021
- 4.2 The Department for Transport's Circular 01/2013 Setting Local Speed Limits advises 'Speed limits should be evidence-led and self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance. Speed limits should be seen by drivers as the maximum rather than a target speed'.
- 4.3 Highland Council's Speed Limits Policy supports following Department for Transport's (DfT) guidance.
- 4.4 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 Section 122 states that the authority act to 'secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians).
- 4.5 Designing Streets and the National Roads Development Guide states that "where a speed limit is set inappropriately, for example substantially lower than the speed that the majority of drivers would otherwise choose, evidence shows it often will not be obeyed and can result in over-reliance on Police enforcement.

5. Analysis

- 5.1 The factors influencing the criteria for reducing the speed limit was reviewed and a further speed count was undertaken. As no other influencing factors had changed in regard to the road corridor the speed count was the only potential variable.
- 5.2 The original speed survey was carried out in June 2020 with the average speed recorded at 49mph. The speed survey for the review was carried out between 27 August and 3 September 2021 with the average speed recorded at 48mph.
- 5.3 A reduction of the speed limit from 60mph to 30mph between Bonar Bridge and Ardgay does not meet the criteria set out in DfT 01/2013 "Setting Local Speed Limits".

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The recommendations in the original review were in accordance with guidance and legislation.
- 6.2 Any decision to lower the speed limit should seek to avoid the need for extensive police enforcement
- 6.3 Legal advice confirms that it is possible to promote a TRO that does not comply with guidance. Officers recommendations shall align with policy and guidance. All TRO's are supported with a Statement of Reasons and this is justified by aligning with the guidance. Should Members elect to promote a TRO outwith the guidance then justification will be sought from members to allow officers to complete the associated Statement of Reasons.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 8 November 2021

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Bonar Bridge to Ardgay Speed survey results 2021

Bonar-Ardgay 2																	Channel:	Channel 1
Speed Summary (Speed Limit 60 Mph)																		
From 27/08/2021 To 03/09/2021																		
	Total Volume	85th Percentile	Mean Average	Standard Deviation	Bin 1 <30Mph	Bin 2 30-<35	Bin 3 35-<40	Bin 4 40-<45	Bin 5 45-<50	Bin 6 50-<55	Bin 7 55-<60	Bin 8 60-<65	Bin 9 65-<70	Bin 10 70-<75	Bin 11 75-<80	Bin 12 80-<85	Bin 13 =>85	
Monday	1298	55	48	32	13	28	166	279	327	273	148	39	17	5	3	0	0	
Tuesday	1358	55	48	32	12	34	157	293	373	280	132	53	15	4	4	1	0	
Wednesday	1377	57	48	32	19	30	147	270	370	282	150	71	25	8	3	2	0	
Thursday		55	47	32														
Friday		55	48	32														
Saturday	1268	56	48	32	30	33	115	281	347	250	121	50	26	10	3	2	0	
Sunday	1130	57	49	33	22	15	111	236	294	218	139	54	22	15	3	1	0	
5 Day Ave.	1371	55	48	32	19	30	159	300	365	281	135	51	18	8	3	1	0	
7 Day Ave.	1322	56	48	32	21	29	146	288	352	268	134	51	20	9	3	1	0	

Highland Council Speed Limit Policy



ROADS AND TRANSPORT SPEED LIMITS POLICY

The Council's Speed Limits Policy was agreed at the meeting of the Transport Services Committee on 5 June 1996.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The main purpose of specific speed limits is to inform drivers where it is appropriate to adopt a speed which is lower than the national speed limit.

2. **General Principles**

- 2.1 Speed limits are normally unnecessary where the character of the road itself limits the speed of vehicles to a level at or below that of the limit under consideration.
- 2.2 Accidents should be a factor in determining the necessity of imposing a limit, but they are not a prerequisite.
- 2.3 Mandatory speed limits should not be used to solve the problems created by isolated hazards.
- 2.4 The minimum length of a speed limit should be 800 metres (½ mile) although relaxation may be permitted in certain circumstances, provided the limit is long enough for the Police to enforce.
- 2.5 The environment of the road is the most important factor to be considered. This is the appearance the road has to the road user and includes such factors as frequent junctions, development, bends, sight lines, schools, etc. Also, to be considered are roads with high traffic levels passing through villages where a speed limit may be desirable to protect the quality of life, always recognising that any limit imposed must be realistic or it will not be observed.
- 2.6 Class III and unclassified roads are automatically subject to a 30mph speed limit if there is a system of street lighting.

3. **Procedures**

- 3.1 The actual speed limit should be based on the existing 85th percentile speed (i.e., the speed at or below which 85% of motorists drive). This is generally accepted as being the maximum safe speed for a road and one which most drivers will observe without undue enforcement.
- 3.2 If the 85th percentile speed is found to exceed what is considered to be a desirable limit by more than 7mph or 20% (whichever is greater) then the lower limit may only be imposed if engineering measures are taken that will reduce vehicle speeds to the required level. Otherwise, the limit indicated by the 85 percentile must be used.
- 3.3 Speed limits cannot on their own be expected to reduce vehicle speeds if they are set at a level substantially below that at which drivers choose to drive in the absence of a limit.
- 3.4 Engineering measures should be introduced to bring about a physical reduction in speed, but this may prove expensive and could be difficult in some locations.
- 3.5 There is little point in establishing a limit, however desirable from an environmental or safety point of view, if it is not going to have any effect on actual vehicle speed. Indeed, a low but inappropriate and incorrectly applied speed limit which cannot be achieved in practice and cannot be adequately enforced could have the very opposite to the desired effect and actually lead to an increase in accidents.
- 3.6 Once approved the necessary plans and schedules will be forwarded to Legal Services who will arrange for the draft Order to be advertised for public comment. If there are no objections, the Order can be made. In the event of objections, however, these must be considered by Committee and either overruled or upheld before the Order can be made.
- 3.7 There was circulated Report No TR27/96 by the Director of Transport Services setting out the criteria to be used in establishing local speed limits. The Report recommended that the Committee accept the criteria of Scottish Office Circular No 1/1993 for speed limits and adopt the procedures set out in the Report for the assessment of speed limits on Highland Council roads.

4. **20mph Speed Limits & 20mph zones**

- 4.1 Roads and Transport Committee meeting on 18 November 1999, it was agreed that 20mph zones and speed limits be in line with the Scottish Executive circular 13/1999 and that any proposed 20mph speed limit be delayed until the results of a National Survey are known in July 2000.